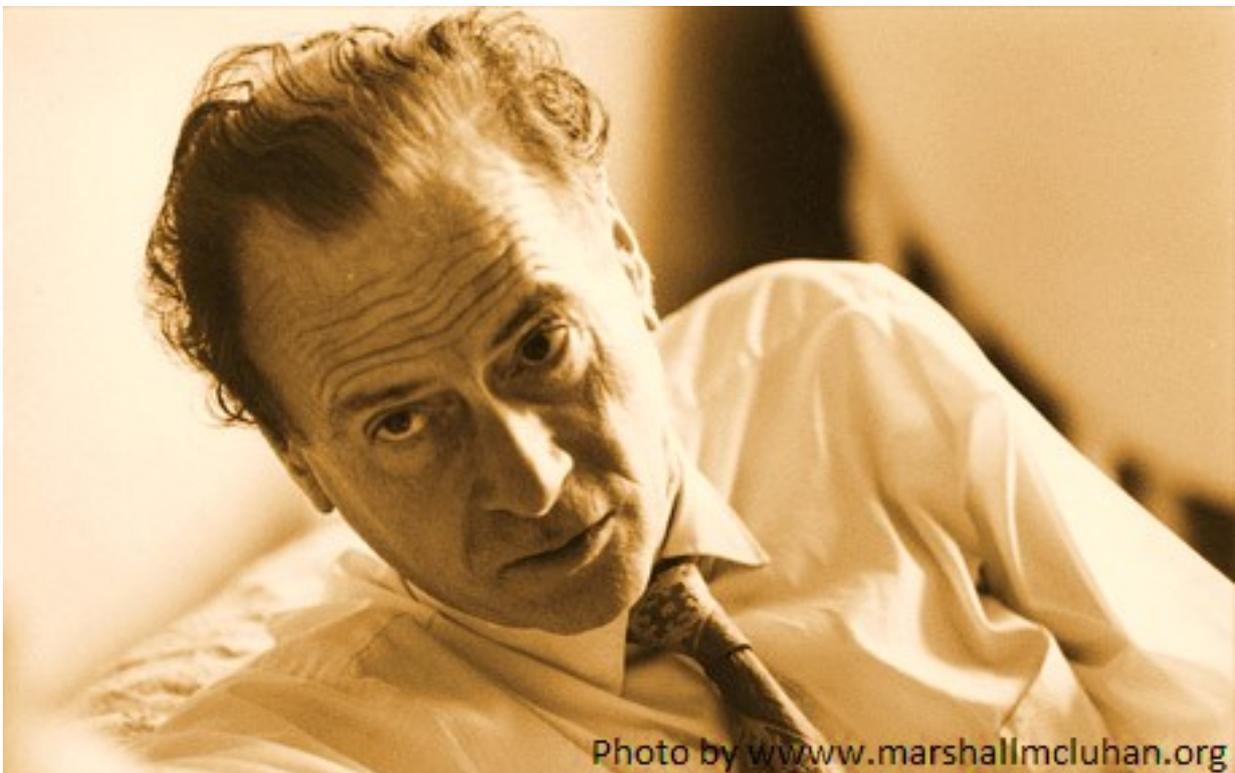


# Marshall McLuhan Centennial

## 1911-2011

*Celebrating the Media Guru*



thursday • dec 8 • 2011 • kathmandu • nepal

 **media**FOUNDATION  
Engaging Communities

**IACER**  
INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED  
COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION, AND RESEARCH



## Words of gratitude

Thank you, everyone!

We were privileged to have the opportunity to organize one of the first Marshall McLuhan centennial celebrations in Asia. We truly live in a “global village” as envisaged by the visionary “media guru” (born 1911 and deceased 1980) and it was only fitting to celebrate his personality and his many ideas that have resurged remarkably with the dramatic expansion of new media landscape.

We at Media Foundation– Nepal would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to our partners—the Institute of Advanced Communication, Education & Research (IACER) and Creative Press—for their support in organizing this landmark event. We are thankful to the speakers, and to volunteers who worked to make this event a memorable occasion as well as to our guests who spared their time to attend the event.

This special newsletter documents the centennial in Nepal by highlighting the event, in words and pictures. We hope you enjoy it! If you have comments or queries, please contact us at the address given below.

With many regards,  
Dharma Adhikari, PhD.  
Secretary, Media Foundation– Nepal



### ABOUT MEDIA FOUNDATION– NEPAL

Based in Kathmandu, Nepal, the Media Foundation is an independent, not-for-profit research and policy initiative launched in the form of a think- (and do-) tank to explore innovative ideas for media development in the emerging democracy. Activities aim to strengthen professionalism, advance media studies, advocate public interest and promote excellence in journalism and communications disciplines.

For further information, please contact  
Media Foundation– Nepal  
2 Shanti Marga, Bhatbhatteni 40,  
PO Box: 9824, Kathmandu, Nepal  
Phone: 977-1-441-5137  
Email: [info@media-foundation.org](mailto:info@media-foundation.org)

## Media Guru Herbert Marshall McLuhan Centenary (1911-2011) Celebration

Co-organized by Media Foundation,

Institute of Advanced Communication, Education & Research (IACER)  
&  
Creative Press

Hotel Shangri-La, Lazimpat, Kathmandu  
1:00 pm; Thursday,  
December 8, 2011

### Program Schedule

MC  
Gopal Jha

■■■

Welcome- **Dharma Adhikari**

■■■

Biographic Video Clip on McLuhan

■■■

Messages from

**Eric McLuhan,**  
son of Marshall McLuhan

**Dominique Scheffel-Dunand,**  
Director, Faculty of Information McLuhan Program in  
Culture and Technology in Toronto

**Lance Strate,** Professor of Communication and Media  
Studies, Fordham University, New York

**Paul Grosswiler,** Editor, Explorations in Media Ecology

■■■

New Media & Marshall McLuhan  
**Kund Dixit**  
Editor, *Nepali Times*

■■■

McLuhan from a Literary Perspective  
**Dr Arun Gupto**

■■■

McLuhan and his Eastern Analogies  
**Dr Dharma Adhikari**

■■■

Vote of Thanks  
**Dr Anand Sharma**

■■■

Refreshments

■■■

# Media Guru McLuhan @ 100 Years Celebration

Journalists, media workers, academicians, and other professionals meet to celebrate one of the last centennial event this year on McLuhan organized around the world. In Nepal, the program was organized on Dec 8, 2011 by the Media Foundation, in collaboration with Institute of Advanced Communication, Education & Research (IACER), and Creative Press. Speakers included Kunda Dixit, Arun Gupto, and Dharma Adhikari. The event was held at Hotel Shangri-La, Kathmandu.



# “Media Guru” McLuhan’s 100 Years Celebrated in Kathmandu

KATHMANDU, December 8, 2011- A centenary celebration for renowned new media visionary Herbert Marshall McLuhan was organized in Kathmandu Thursday by Media Foundation- Nepal, Institute for Advanced Communication, Education and Research and Creative Press.

The event participated in by journalists, media workers, academicians, and other professionals was one of the last centennials this year on McLuhan organized around the world

Journalist Kunda Dixit spoke about McLuhan’s uncanny ability to foresee in the 1960s as to how the new media would develop.

“For me one of his geniuses was to look at things in a new way, turning around accepted phrases,” Dixit said. Hot and cool media, surfing and even ‘wiki’ were derived from McLuhan, he said of the Canadian media theorist, who coined popular phrases like ‘medium is the message’.

Dixit said the message, not the Internet medium, had the power to bridge ideologies. “In the hash tag of trivia, wisdom may be suffering,” he said. “The message, that is, the content is still the king.”

Dr. Arun Gupto, an English professor at IACER, highlighted McLuhan’s time and milieu from the perspective of literature. “Media and myths were popular in those days. The form mattered,” he said.

Dr. Dharma Adhikari of Media Foundation made a presentation on the life and work of McLuhan and traced his possible links with the eastern tradition in his works and in related works by others in South Asia.

“He drew on eastern analogies,” Dr. Adhikari said.

Gopal Chitrakar of Media Foundation delivered the welcome speech to the select audiences gathered to celebrate the occasion.

Dr. Ananda Sharma of IACER delivered vote of thanks.

The program began with an introduction of McLuhan by journalist Gopal Jha, and the reading of the messages received from Dr Eric McLuhan, son of Marshall himself, Dr Dominique Scheffel-Dunand, Director, McLuhan Program in Culture and Technology, Toronto, Dr. Paul Grosswiler, editor of Explorations in Media Ecology (EME) journal, and Lance Strate, Professor of Communication and Media Studies, Fordham University, New York. The messages were read out by a school boy, Astitwa Adhikari.

A video clip of a 1967 interview with McLuhan was also shown.

The program was organized at Shangri-La hotel in Kathmandu. •



# Messages from abroad

*Message from **Eric McLuhan**,  
son of Marshall McLuhan (Dec 9, 2011)*

Dear Dharma,  
I am particularly gratified to hear of your efforts in regard to my father and his contemporary relevance. The hundreds of commemorative conferences and events during this year are themselves testimony to his influence. I am told that they will continue, now, well into the new year!



Congratulations on the success of your program! You and your associates undertook a formidable challenge and evidently you have managed that smoothly. What I have seen of and learned about the event indicates a high degree of professionalism all round. I assume you have kept records of the various sessions. It would be nice to see some of them on a web-site.

Best regards, and  
Wishes for a New Year filled with blessings,

Best,  
Eric

*Message from **Dominique Scheffel-Dunand**,  
Director, Faculty of Information McLuhan Program in Culture and Technology in Toronto,  
Canada (Dec 8, 2011)*

2011 marked the 100th anniversary of the birth of Marshall McLuhan, a literary and media icon. Appreciating that no figure is more universally associated with the rise of media, information, and our transformation into a digital society, as the Director of the Faculty of Information McLuhan Program in Culture and Technology at the University of Toronto, I would like to congratulate your community of journalists and media practitioners, and thank the event co-organizers (Media Foundation Nepal, Institute of Advanced Communication, Education and Research- IACER, and Creative Press) to pay tribute to Marshall McLuhan, the man and his ideas, this year in Kathmandu.



As scholars, journalists and media analysts from around the world focused on McLuhan's history, this year, Kathmandu, like Toronto, has the unique opportunity to simultaneously treasure its past and showcase its future -- and present it to the world across the globe in a fashion that has something for everyone.

Your discussions around topics centered on the relationship between media companies; entrepreneurial journalism; gamification will, we are certain, contribute greatly to the global conversation on the "The Future of Media".

Again congratulations from Toronto to have dared to produce such an event this year!

Dominique Scheffel-Dunand  
Director, Faculty of Information McLuhan Program in Culture and Technology  
Toronto (Canada)

# McLuhan @100 years

HERBERT MARSHALL MCLUHAN, 1911– 2011



‘माध्यम नै सन्देश हो’ -हर्बर्ट मार्शल मक्लुहन

thursday ■ dec 8 ■ 2011 ■ kathmandu

*Message from Lance Strate,*

Professor of Communication and Media Studies, Fordham University, New York

Dear Dharma,

Thank you for your note concerning the Marshall McLuhan Centenary event that you have organized in Nepal. Yours may be the distinction of being the last Centenary event of the year, but as we say, it would not be the least. It is indeed encouraging to know that over this past year, the 100th anniversary of Marshall McLuhan's birth has been celebrated in every corner of the world, with the possible exception of Antarctica. It is indeed fitting that this McLuhan Centenary extend now to the "roof of the world" as it ought to mark McLuhan's permanent ascension into the intellectual canon worldwide.



Marshall McLuhan's approach to understanding media was so far ahead of its time when he introduced it back in the mid-20th century that many people, including a number of otherwise bright and well-educated scholars, were not able to appreciate it. It was not until the popularization of the internet and digital media in the 90s that a McLuhan revival began, and it is that wave that we are riding today. When McLuhan argued that an era dominated by print media and mechanical technologies had given way to a new era shaped by the characteristics of electronic technologies and telecommunications, many were dumbfounded and in denial. Today, we are witness to the disappearance of newspapers, the marginalization of the printed book, the decline of letter writing and downgrading of postal services, and the longstanding shift away from industrialism. When McLuhan suggested that literacy had altered the functioning of our nervous systems, and that electronics were doing so again, many, even among those sympathetic to his views, considered his intuitions to be nothing more than wild and unfounded speculation. But in recent years, research on brain functioning has shown that he was right, that learning to read and write actually rewires the brain, and that watching television and playing videogames alters brain functioning as well. When McLuhan connected the adoption of television to the social and political disruptions of the 1960s, many were skeptical. Today, there is no denying that movements such as the Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street are made possible by various new media such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and the use of mobile devices.

That we live today in interesting times, as your neighbors to the north have been known to say, there is no doubt. That we desperately need to understand our times, and understand the environment that gives rise to the events we are witnessing, there is no doubt. And that we need, therefore, to study McLuhan there ought to be no doubt. Through McLuhan, and through broadening that study to include the field of media ecology and the scholars that influenced and were influenced by McLuhan, we can understand that we occupy media environments, environments of our collective creation that in turn create us and recreate us in their own image, individually and collectively. Through McLuhan and other media ecology scholars, we can understand that human life and human culture in its most basic form is born out of a media environment of speech, of the spoken word, an acoustic space, powered by symbols, by language. And we can understand that the shift from tribal societies to what was traditionally called civilization, large-scale settlements, cities, with codified law, government, concepts of property, specialized occupations, education, etc., goes hand in hand with the development of systems of writing, the single most important invention in human history. And it was the invention of the alphabet by the Semitic peoples, and its further modification by the ancient Greeks, that gave the west its distinctive characteristics, as well as forming the basis of later Arabic and Hindu cultures. And when the printing press with moveable type, based on alphabetic writing, was introduced in 15th century Europe, it ushered in what we refer to as the modern world, and the ascendancy of the west for the centuries that followed. And today, we find ourselves in a new electronic environment, one that we are still trying to understand, one that promises some form of what McLuhan called the "global village" accompanied by various forms of neo-tribalism that McLuhan also spoke of. And we can either try to understand what is happening, and through understanding try to influence the course of events, or we can stick our heads in the sand and let our technologies take control.

McLuhan said, "the medium is the message," and this goes to the heart of his media ecology, which is the study of media as environments. It is a wake-up call, first and foremost, a call to become aware, to observe what is going on all around us. Environments tend to be invisible because they become routine. We ignore them, they fade into the background, and we find ourselves, for all intents and purposes, blind to them. McLuhan asks us to open our eyes, to pay attention, and to contemplate what is going on all around us. He characterized his ideas as probes, tentative explorations, not dogma, because he wants us, all of us, to use our senses and open our minds, to look and to think for ourselves. It's not about theorizing. It is about making connections, seeing the whole world as interconnected, an ecology, and studying the relationships, the networks, that exist among the various phenomena that we typically regard only in isolation from one another. And to begin by considering the means, the methods, the modes by which we relate to and act upon our world, and our fellow human beings, by considering our technologies, our languages, our codes and symbols and tools and containers and our art forms, by considering our media.

On behalf of McLuhan scholars all around the world, and on behalf of the Media Ecology Association, which is dedicated to spreading and advancing McLuhan's approach, I extend greetings from my home town of New York City, and the fact that I can do so in this way is just one more indication of McLuhan's supreme relevance to us today. I applaud the organizers and sponsors of this Centenary celebration, Media Foundation Nepal, the Institute of Advanced Communication, Education and Research IACER, and Creative Press for their hard work. And I wish you all the best of luck in your proceedings, and know that I wish I could be with you in person right now, as, in the end, there is nothing quite like the medium of human presence. I am certain your discussions will be stimulating and inspiring, and it is my sincere hope that when it is all over and done, you will all do the following: Be the medium, and spread the message.

Sincerely,  
Lance Strate

**Message from Paul Grosswiler,**  
Editor, *Explorations in Media Ecology*  
Professor & Chair, Communication and Journalism, University of Maine, USA

I am excited to learn through my former McLuhan Seminar graduate student and now leading scholar in his own right, Dr. Dharma Adhikari, that the Media Foundation, in collaboration with the Institute of Advanced Communication, Education and Research, and Creative Press, is organizing this McLuhan centenary event in Nepal. Nepal joins a truly global village of McLuhan centenary events stretching from his native Canada, to the United States, Belgium, Italy, Poland, and, I am sure, elsewhere. I only wish I had an opportunity to celebrate with you in person.

European media scholar Joost van Loon wrote in his 2008 book, "Media Technology: Critical Perspectives," that "one of the most influential trajectories of theorizing media technology . . . emerged from North America in the middle of the twentieth century and provided a radically different perspective on media from the dominant schools of communication studies.



Within this trajectory, Marshall McLuhan was the central figure, who was "highly controversial inside and outside the academic world. During his heyday in the 1960s he was considered a guru, a prophet, the founder of a new call for "media studies." In the 1970s his "imaginative and visionary ideas were discredited."

But, "it has become more and more clear that McLuhan's prophetic thoughts on" the global impact of media are more adequate than before" and it may be a good idea to "return to some of his works and reinstate some of its theoretical focus."

The centenary of McLuhan's birth is an excellent opportunity to concur with van Loon, that McLuhan is more relevant after all these years. Here are my top 10 reasons why:

### *Top 10 Reasons McLuhan is still relevant*

#### **10. Media are one of many causal factors in history**

The major misunderstanding of McLuhan is reading him as a technological determinist who believes that all changes are caused by technological forces. The fact that media have the capacity to act and even determine effects does not mean social, cultural, economic, political, physiological and psychological forces are irrelevant. Technological processes are never inconsequential and rarely correspond with the intentions of their creators.

#### **9. Media extensions are painful**

Media are extensions of human faculties, and, in a sort of autoamputation of those faculties, we respond with shock and numbness in response to the pain that awareness would bring.

#### **8. Narcissus narcosis is speeding up**

McLuhan used the myth of Narcissus to describe how we are numb to the fact that media alter our realities, that they are extensions of ourselves. The media environment we have created generates the context in which we make sense of the world. But when to the power of the new medium to introduce new changes into our affairs by media that we fail to recognize are extensions, the result is numbness to the technology that extends us. McLuhan used the term Narcissistic – embroiled in love for a self that is mistaken for the other, that is, the medium.

The narcissism and narcosis may be speeding up with the growth of social media – myspace, facebook, mi-fi, all pointing toward the narcissism in their names, but not aware of the changes they are making to human affairs.

#### **7. The Maelstrom is speeding up**

Poe's "Descent in the Maelstrom" became McLuhan's metaphor for the rapidly changing media environment, and invokes the mariner's detached observation and logical action as a model for understanding media. In the story, if I may quote, the mariner recounts that:

"It may appear strange, but now, when we were in the very jaws of the gulf, I felt more composed than when we were only approaching it. Having made up my mind to hope no more, I got rid of a great deal of that terror. . . "It may look like boasting - but what I tell you is truth - I began to reflect how magnificent a thing it was to die in such a manner, and how foolish it was in me to think of so paltry a consideration as my own individual life, in view of so wonderful a manifestation of God's power. After a little while I became possessed with the keenest curiosity about the whirl itself. I positively felt a wish to explore its depths, even at the sacrifice I was going to make.

I made, also, three important observations - the third, that, between two masses of equal size, the one cylindrical, and the other of any other shape, the cylinder was absorbed the more slowly.

I no longer hesitated what to do. I resolved to lash myself securely to the water cask upon which I now held, to cut it loose from the counter, and to throw myself with it into the water."

*(Continued on next page)*

## 6. All communication is mediated

By taking language for granted, those who forget that language is a medium, created theories in which all subsequent media are additions, causes of miscommunication, bias and distortion. This idealizes pure communication as being without media, or with media that are transparent.

Colleagues who study weblogs and virtual communities posit the spoken word as pure communication.

Those who have not forgotten the mediated origins of being human, are less pessimistic about the future. Media are intrinsic to the unfolding of all human history. The spoken word, writing, pictograms, the alphabet, numbers – and wheels and roads – are crucial communication media that helped shape human history.

## 5. Media change is transformative, not additive

McLuhan sought to provide a detailed understanding of how media affect us, how we entered a completed new era in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in which the enhancement and amplification of print culture and literacy was transformed by electronic media. This shift had profound implications that altered our entire world irreversibly.

## 4. And media change what being human is

These alterations don't only affect our environment, but the very nature of the human species itself.

## 3. We have always been cyborgs

The idea of media as extensions found connections in the late 1980s with cyborg theory and post-humanism. McLuhan was ignored in this effort to come to terms with the technological appropriation of human functions. If all media are extensions of humans, though, then, we have always been cyborgs. The only new aspect of cyborgs is that we have become aware of our cyboriginal nature.

## 2. Media are extensions that obsolesce and retrieve other media, and reverse into their opposites.

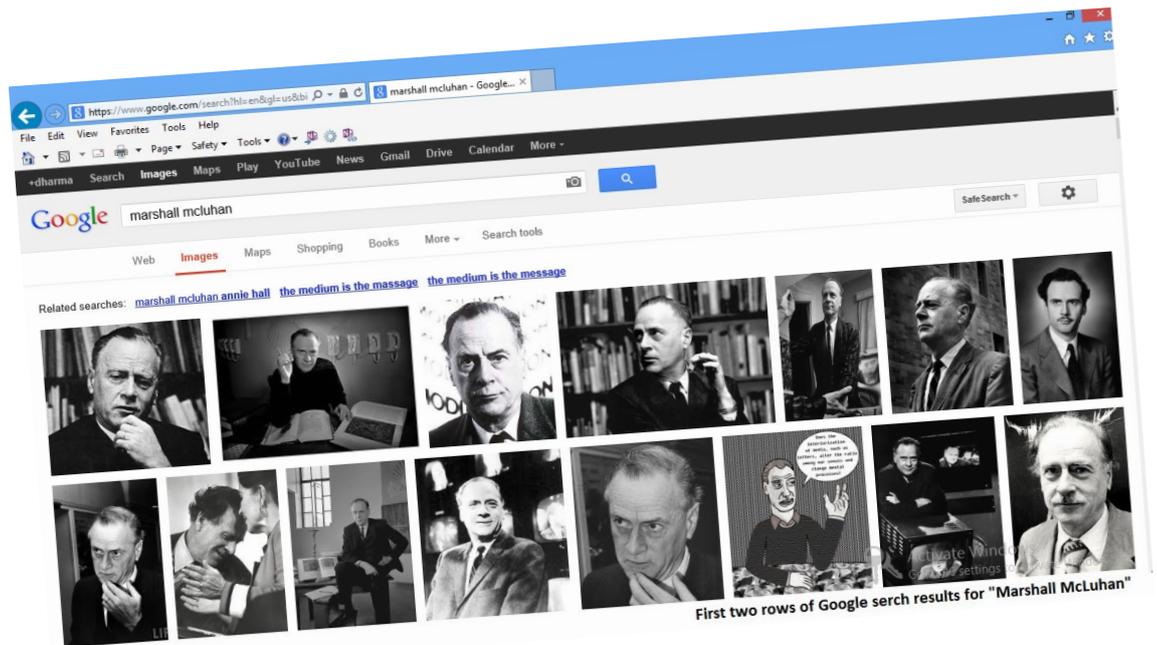
McLuhan's method of exploring media was the tetrad, by which any medium could be analyzed: What does it enhance or amplify? What does it obsolesce? What does it retrieve from the realm of the previously obsolesced? And what does the medium flip into when it reaches the limit of its potential?

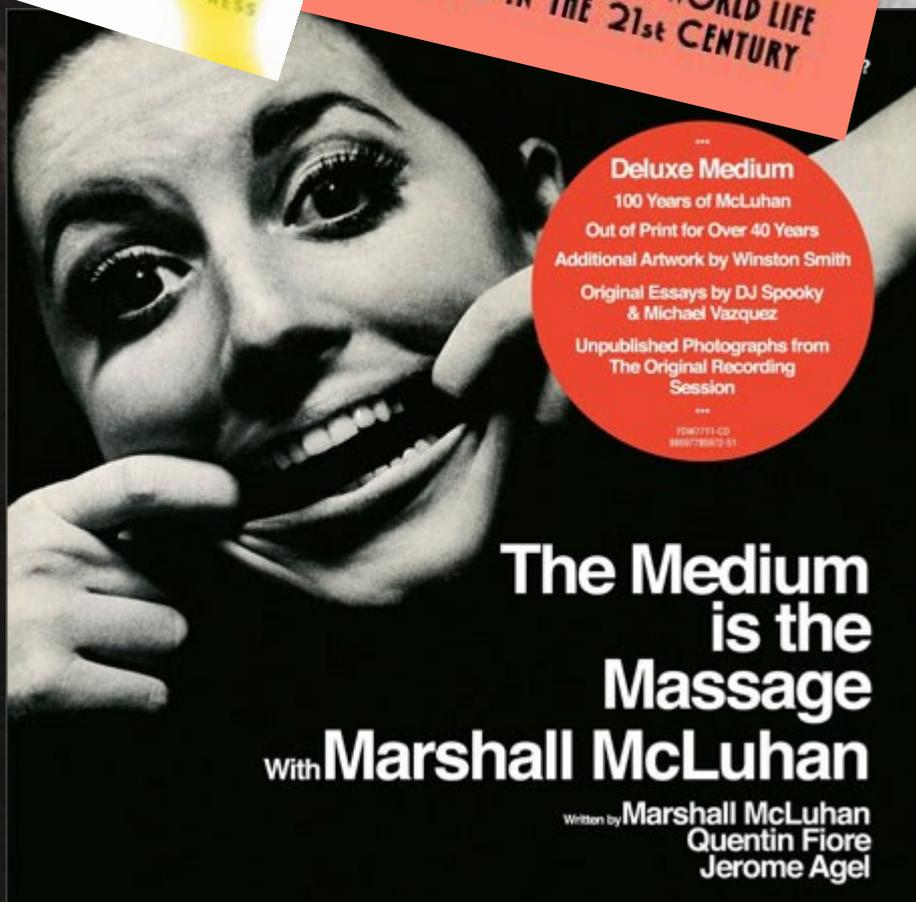
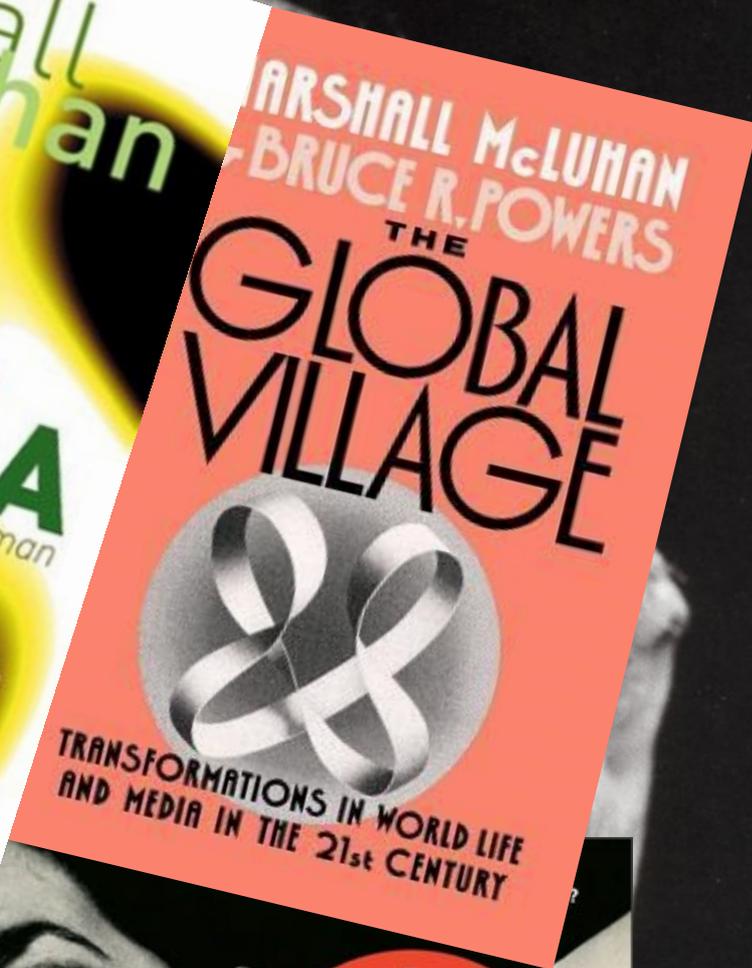
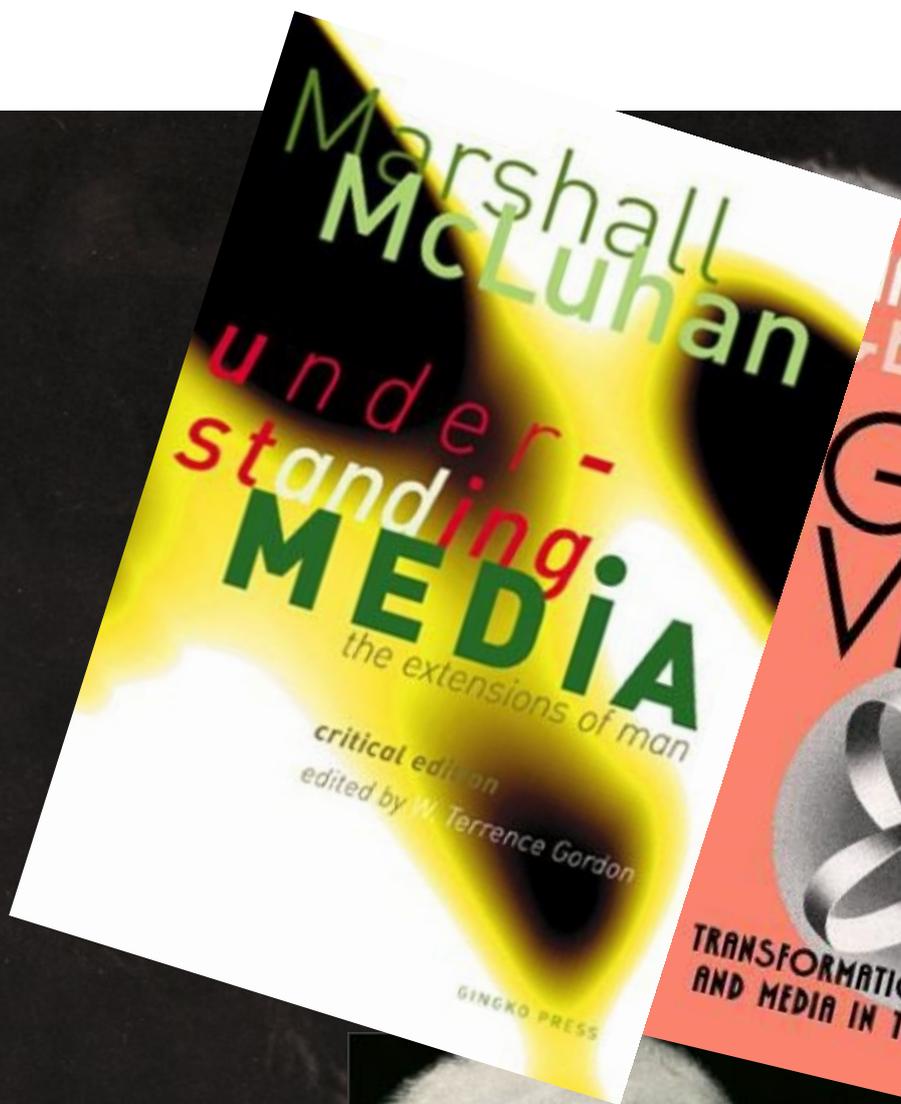
These comprise McLuhan's "unique version of understanding media – "the pallet" with which he "painted pictures of media life cycles, which were always intertwined with social, cultural and political processes."

## 1. New media are not new

As I see the rush to understand the effect of new media on culture and communication, what is missing most is the awareness that there have always been new media and that there are patterns of effects – that is McLuhan's greatest relevance today with the proliferation of new media technologies at dizzying speeds. Understanding Media provides a detached method of accepting and analyzing all media, new or old, in cultural and social contexts, with a method that increases our chances of survival.

- Paul Grosswiler





...  
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Original Essays by DJ Spooky  
& Michael Vazquez  
Unpublished Photographs from  
The Original Recording  
Session  
...  
100711-02  
ISBN 978-0-8021-5111-1

**The Medium  
is the  
Massage**  
With **Marshall McLuhan**  
Written by **Marshall McLuhan  
Quentin Fiore  
Jerome Agel**

# OP-ED Article: McLuhan 100

By **Dharma Adhikari**

*The medium is the message. The world has become a "Global Village".*

This year marks the centenary of the birth of the Canadian English professor who coined these provocative phrases and went on to reinvent media studies. He was born into a world of printed words and black-and-white TV but ended up predicting the effects of new technology on psycho-social environments.

This visionary was born on July 21, 1911 and died on December 31, 1980. Since July this year, several events have been organized around the world to celebrate the centenary of his life and works. The advent of new media, digital technologies, and the Internet has led to a revival of interest in this enigmatic new media prophet.

McLuhan could be relevant to our experiences in Nepal where we have become increasingly wired. We are more enticed, as McLuhan would put it, to the forms of "platforms" and "tools", blind to the true character of these new media. His centenary offers a wonderful opportunity to reflect on some of his ideas.

In Nepal, the Media Foundation, in collaboration with the Institute of Advanced Communication, Education and Research (IACER), and Creative Press, is celebrating the occasion tomorrow afternoon in Kathmandu. Against this backdrop, I share some thoughts on McLuhan.

I first encountered McLuhan at RR College in the mid-1990s while I taught Media Studies to MA English students. I found him ambiguous and difficult to understand. Yet, he was captivating in his one-liners and puns, imparting illuminating insights here and there.

In 1999, while in the US, I had the privilege of taking a semester of graduate seminar on McLuhan. It was a rare opportunity to immerse myself in the study of the "media guru", and to leaf through the musty volumes by McLuhan in the university library. Until then, journal databases were not up to the mark, and Google Books were inconceivable. My professor, Dr Paul Grosswiler, had promised that McLuhan would be a unique experience, but he warned not to overlook the media scholar's weak points. Besides, it is easy to fall into the trap of the cult, the McLuhan fanatics.

It has been noted that even as a media scholar, McLuhan did not own a television set. And for him, "media" were not merely "news media"; they included "artifacts" ranging from wheels to airplanes, nail-cutters to missiles. The structures of these technologies alter how we perceive and understand the world around us, and shape and define who we are. In other words, for McLuhan, khukuri, gundruk, palsi kura, or mohi (buttermilk), as much as sarangi, Gorkhaptra, NTV, or Koshi barrage are major media of Nepal, historically. He considered all media technologies as extensions of our bodies: a khukuri is an extension of hands, the wheel, or an airplane an extension of the feet, the telescope an extension of our eyes, etc.

Even as a vociferous reader, McLuhan read only one of the two facing pages. The reason: with the advent of instantaneous electrical age, he argued, the old patterns of linear reading were out of date! Fifty or sixty years ago, imagine the impact of McLuhan's scandalous statement among his peers who staunchly adhered to academic rigor. As a scholar of media, McLuhan was hardly interested in the content.

Sure, the "early" McLuhan, as reflected in *The Mechanical Bride* (1951), appears concerned with the content of the medium, attacking the commercial advertisements and mass culture. He is paranoid about the modern technology, and utterly pessimistic about the future of mankind. After the *Bride*, perhaps on some epiphany, he started saying that the medium is the message. Since *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962), he concentrated on the medium specifically. The "later" McLuhan, in *Understanding Media* (1964), appears very optimistic about new technologies and the future of mankind.

McLuhan took a "transformative" approach to media studies, as opposed to the traditional "transmission" model of communication, focusing on causes and hypodermic effect on audience. And that effect is the "message", as he writes: the message of any medium or technology is the change of scale or pace or pattern that it introduces into human affairs. Just think of the influence of mobile phones or cyber cafes in Nepal, or the impact of Maoist guns, large scale human exodus (and perhaps a hike in Nepal-bound international airliners) and wire transfers. The political/social transformation of Nepal is yet to be analyzed from this type of media perspective.

According to McLuhan's *Laws of Media*, any artifact does four things simultaneously—it enlarges or enhances, it erodes or obsolesces something already there, it retrieves something that had been there earlier, and it reverses or flips into something when pushed to the limits. To look at these four effects is to study media. For example, shopping mall (something we relate to these days), enhances choice, erodes our hat bazaars, retrieves crowds, and reverses into vanishing public squares. Understanding these relationships is the key to human autonomy, he observed.

Else, there is the danger of us falling into media "massage" or manipulation. For example, the print culture of linear thinking and over-rationalization led many western countries to disregard the analogical and the intuitive, a feature of oral and electronic culture.

McLuhan believed in the transformative power of new media, and wrote his many books in a "mosaic" or collage form by juxtaposing various forms of medium (content)-alphabets, pictures, symbols, blurbs, etc, almost like on a Web page. The effect, he showed, was startling. He responded to the "poetry and the beauty of the new technological environment", and embraced pop culture, and was indifferent to academic critics who derided his lack of references. In fact, he often used others' phrases and ideas as if they were his own.

McLuhan's reference to the eastern cultures is perhaps of interest to us. He saw them as pre-literate, with integral sense awareness,

now retrieved in the West in the form of electronic simultaneity. However, Hinduism, stripped of its alternative meanings, such as the rational Nyaya system of logic, served him as one of the several "counter-environments" that he surmised to critique the dominant typographic culture of the West. This is evidenced by his recurrent use of eastern analogies, his study of classical and modern Hindu texts, and his interest in aphoristic writings such as the Upanishads.

There are parallels between McLuhan, the avatar of technology fashioning our artificial environments, and Krishna, the Hindu spiritual avatar in a natural environment. The texts *Bhagavad Gita* and *Upanishads* devote much space on the nature of perceptions in the pre-technological world, a world McLuhan sees as retrieved in the form of electronic transcendence.

In recent decades, massive transformations in literacy and technology are reconfiguring India and Nepal, the ancient grounds of Hinduism, possibly making them more visual or rational. Indian and Nepali print industry is actually growing, not declining, unlike in the West. It would be interesting to see how their rapid adoption of homogenizing alphabet may have, as McLuhan observed, eroded the East's obsession for the cosmic and the ritual, and fostered "intense concentration on minute segments and specialist tasks".

But McLuhan also noted the countervailing power of radio, "the supreme form of communication" in India, and by extension now in Nepal. Despite radio's power to contract the world to size of a village, he observed, it did not homogenize the village. The increasing shifts towards digital, two-way and participatory communication such as mobile phones and the Internet today, which McLuhan could not foresee during his days, have also challenged the center-to-periphery model of communication. In Nepal, for instance, where mobile radio is gaining ground and WiFi connections continue to expand.

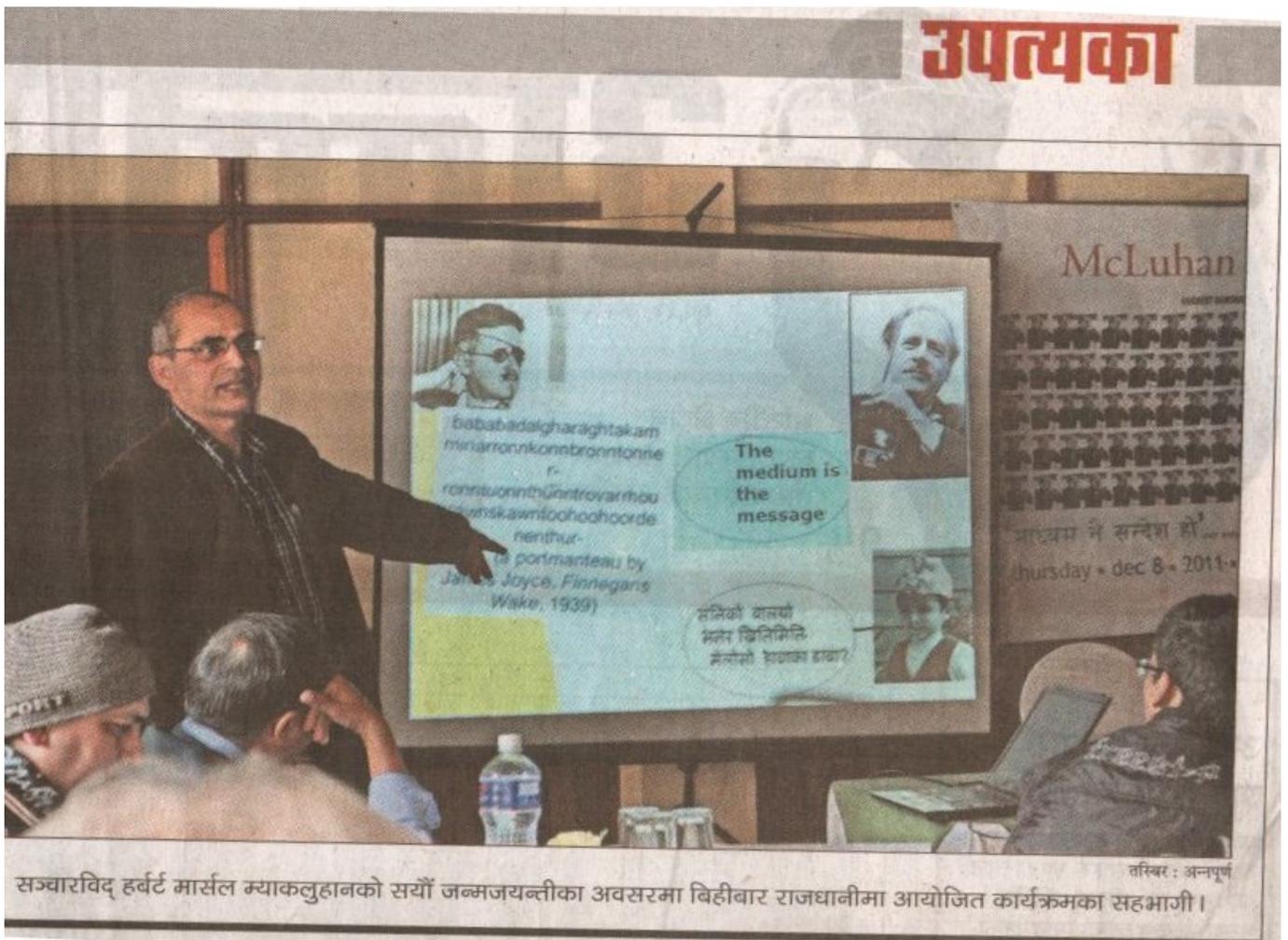
Clearly, the parallel growth in broadcast and electronic media in Nepal and India suggests an increasing trend toward hybridization, perhaps breeding a new release of energy and change, as McLuhan would put it. We can only guess what such energy has done to our politics and culture, or our way of life.

There is an element of technological determinism in McLuhan's views and some contradictions, but we do see some of his visions coming true, for example, his idea of the "city as classroom". He championed greater use of new technologies in academia, bemoaned the persistent "literate bias", and despised the culture that did not encourage youths to embrace creativity, diversity, counter-culture, fieldwork, decentralized or individual-focused customized learning, etc.—the attributes and consequences of new media. In McLuhan's reckoning, only giving up long-held biases and taking critical approach to learning would suit the changing times.

*(The McLuhan Centenary event, open to invited guests, will be held at Shangri-La hotel, on the afternoon of Dec. 8, Thursday)*

From *Republica*, Dec 07, 2011

# In the News



**Marshall McLuhan Centennial**  
*1911-2011*  
*Celebrating the media Guru*

thursday • dec 8 • 2011 • kathmandu • nepal